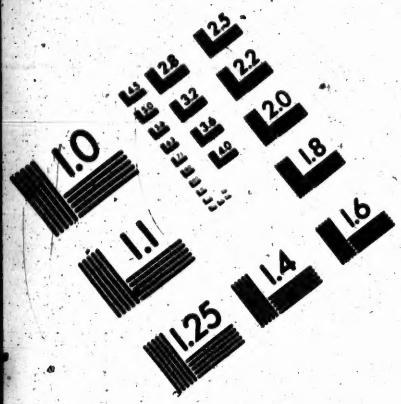

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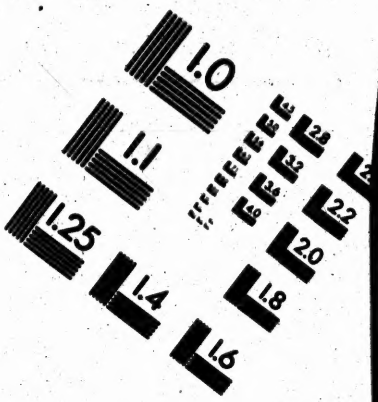

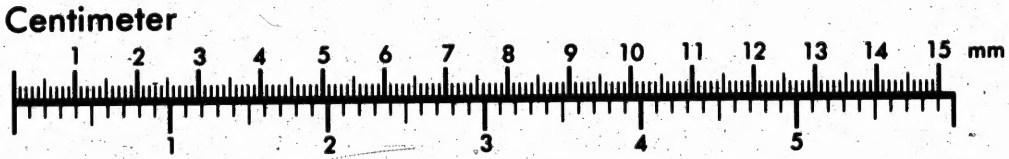

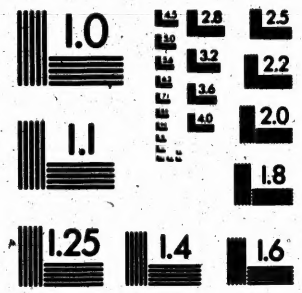

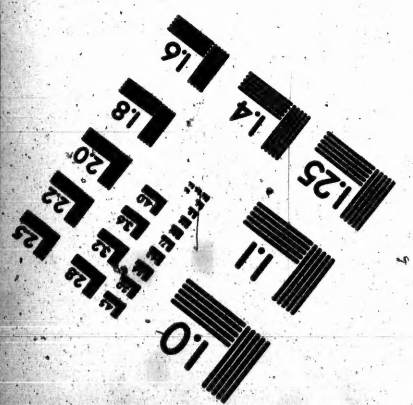

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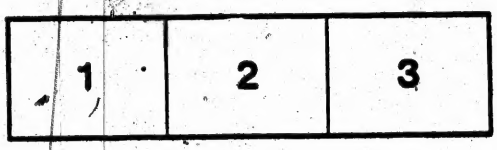

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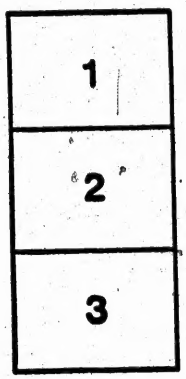

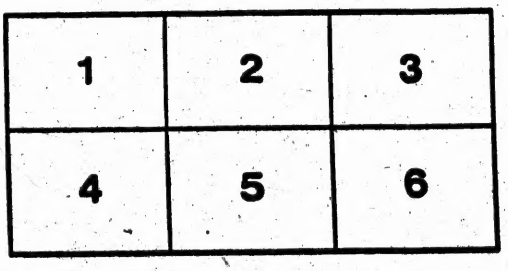

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THE

IMAGE OF PROPHECY.

A SERMON

IN WHICH THE

Vision of Nebuchadnezzar,

KING OF BABYLON,

AS INTERPRETED BY

DANIEL THE PROPHET,

IS EXAMINED FROM

THE POST-MILLENIAL STANDPOINT,

AND SHOWN TO BE NOT ONLY AT VARIANCE WITH,
BUT ENTIRELY SUBVERSIVE OF THE
PRE-MILLENIAL THEORY.

BY REV. T. L. WILKINSON.

PRICE, 5 CENTS.

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INTRODUCTION.

The author of this sermon from early youth has been more or less interested in hearing and reading about the time and accompaniments of the Second Advent. Also in the order of divine Providence, a few years since my field of labor was in a section of country where Pre-Millenialism held almost undisputed sway. Soon after that I was drawn into a public debate in which this question played an important part. These circumstances encouraged and compelled me to make the matter a subject of careful and diligent investigation. The result was to confirm me in the belief that Pre-Millenialism was without scripture warrant, and could only be maintained by a perverted use of the Word of God, and that too, in spite of the fact that so many eminent scholars and christians had embraced it. I found, in the course of my investigations, that every pre-millenial writer, without exception, appealed with great confidence, if not triumph, to the vision of Nebuchadnezzar in support of his theory. This led me to give special consideration to this portion of scripture, and I soon saw that great violence was done to it in order to make it serve a needy and erroneous cause. I discovered that Daniel's interpretation of this sublime vision was utterly subversive of pre-millenialism, and in my debate it was virtually abandoned by my antagonist as if it were a scuttled ship. Under these circumstances the reader will not wonder at my surprise at finding, a few years since, in the *Montreal Witness*, a sermon on this very subject by the Rev. Canon (now Bishop) Baldwin of Montreal, in which the pre-millenial theory was strongly urged and defended. To prevent others from being misled by the error it contained I wrote a criticism of the sermon, but the judicious editor preferred to avoid anything that would provoke discussion on theological matters, and wrote me proposing that I should preach a sermon on the same subject, send him the manuscript, and he would publish it instead of the criticism. I complied with his proposal

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and the sermon, substantially the same as here presented, was published in said paper in February 1877, I think. During the interval between that time and the present, though I have read and written considerably on the subject, I see no cause to change a single position then taken. I believe this exposition to be not only scriptural, but I believe every principal position taken to be invulnerable, hence I court criticism if any reader thinks otherwise. And if the exposition of this vision, herein contained, be correct, then I claim that the doctrine of pre-millenialism is false and must be abandoned. This may seem a bold position, and, to some, an unwarrantable one, but so fully am I persuaded of its truth that I commit myself to it in this public manner. Believing this, the sermon is sent out to the world, not to display the talent or promote the popularity of the author, but to assist in some humble degree, in promoting truth and uprooting error. May the great Head of the Church accept and bless the feeble endeavor is my most earnest prayer.

T. L. WILKINSON.

Brantford, August 1884.

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream.

A SERMON.

"And in the second year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, Nebuchadnezzar dreamed dreams wherewith his spirit was troubled, and his sleep brake from him."—Daniel, 2: 1.

After the overwhelming defeat of the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, in the days of Elijah, the question as to the vanity of idols on the one hand, and the existence and sovereignty of God on the other, should have been forever settled. But the same battle in various forms has often been repeated, and still rages. The God of Israel has, on many occasions, and in various ways, vindicated his claims to the veneration and love of mankind, but as a race, we have been slow to learn the lessons taught us, and slower still to put them into practice.

One of those occasions on which the God of heaven came to assert his claims, was when his people were captives in Babylon. Idolatry was in the ascendancy; it was exacting, oppressive, and unjust in its demands, persecuting in its spirit, and arrogant in its pretensions. The holy vessels of the Lord's house had been carried into an idol temple at Shinar; a haughty and impious monarch sat upon the throne, and a demand was about to be made upon God's chosen ones to bow down and worship a great image of gold which the king purposed to set up in the plain of Dura. Doubtless in his day-dreams the indistinct outlines of this great image were already floating before his mind, and from day to day assuming more definite, if not more gigantic proportions. Partly, no doubt, to strengthen the faith of his people, and so prepare them for the fiery ordeal through which they were soon to pass, and partly to impress the mind of Nebuchadnezzar with a sense of the divine power and supremacy, the Almighty proposed to put the claims of this proud oppressor to the test. The boundlessness of the divine resources is seen in the sequel. Taking advantage of Nebuchadnezzar's image-mania, the Divine Spirit visits him in his night-visions, and probably while dreaming out his favorite project, gives him a glimpse of an image so much greater, so much brighter, so much more terrible than anything he had ever seen, or dreamed about before, that he became affrighted and "his sleep brake from him." As you are doubtless aware, upon awaking he could not recall his

dream. Yet his spirit was so troubled that he was in agony of mind to know what it was. And surely he might ascertain when Babylon was full of "magicians and astrologers, and sorcerers," and wise men; accordingly he had them summoned into his presence, and demanded of them that they would make known to him the dream, and the interpretation thereof, on pain of being cut to pieces and their houses made a dunghill. Notwithstanding the confidence he had hitherto reposed in them, of course they could do neither the one nor the other. We need not trace particularly what immediately ensued, further than to remark that astrology, sorcery, magic, and all the arts of divination were placed in contrast with the wisdom and power of Israel's God, to the infinate disparagement of the former, and the infinite honor of the latter. Daniel, the prophet of the Lord, comes forward to tell the king his dream and the interpretation thereof.

I. THE DREAM.

In his dream the king saw "an image whose brightness was excellent, and whose form was terrible, standing before him. His head was of gold, his arms and breast of silver, his belly and thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet part of iron, and part of clay." He also saw "a stone cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them; and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth."

II. THE INTERPRETATION.

1. *The Image.*—Daniel says the image represented four great kingdoms, and he also indicates with considerable clearness what kingdoms they were. Beginning with the kingdom of Babylon or Chaldea, represented by Nebuchadnezzar as the head of gold, we have in the succession, first, the Medo-Persian; second, the Grecian or Macedonian, and third, the Roman. What particular elements in these four kingdoms were represented by the gold, silver, brass, iron and clay, is not so generally agreed upon. That they could not have been intended to represent mere civil power or human forms of government, is evident from the fact that there is no necessary hostility between Christ's kingdom and the civil power. Not only is this the case, but the civil or secular power is an ordinance of God, and must be right in itself, and so long as exercised in righteousness must be well-pleasing to Him. Hence he uses the language of men relating to earthly kingdoms with which to describe figuratively, his own rule and authority in the moral world. Whatever the image represents will be destroyed; but it is highly improbable that earthly kingdoms and govern-

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ments will ever be destroyed, at least while time continues. "Kings shall be nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers" to the Church; but if earthly kingdoms are to pass away, their kings and queens will also pass away. The Psalmist says (72: 10, 11,) "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents; the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts; yea, all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve him." "The nation and kingdom that will not serve him shall perish: yea, *those* nations shall be utterly wasted." (Isa. 60: 12.) Not so, however, of other nations. They are to become "the kingdoms of our Lord and His Christ." Now, all this clearly implies that the nations of the earth are to be subject to Christ, and also that their distinct nationalities will be preserved. Christ, however, as the head of the Church, will be "King of kings, and Lord of lords." If the antagonism of the stone is not to secular power, therefore, in itself, it is improbable that it would be to the particular forms, or even the different degrees of that power found in these particular kingdoms. But if the secular power was not intended, what would be? This is the question it devolves upon us, in humble dependence upon God, to answer. It seems reasonable, as a point from which to set out, that the elements in the image which were to be destroyed by the stone, would represent something in the kingdoms in question that was the most antagonistic to the interests of the stone,—the most diverse in character and influence. And what would that be but *anti-Christianism or idolatry*? Moreover it is a fact, susceptible of the most satisfactory proof, that from the days of Nimrod, the founder of the Babylonian monarchy, until its final overthrow, idolatry had been incorporated with the national faith and civil government, and constituted one of the most potent influences for controlling the populace. In fact, all the nations represented by this image were idolatrous nations; and what is somewhat remarkable, the idolatry of these nations was largely of one particular type, and that type was peculiar in its character. It was not mere superstition, in the ordinary sense, or man's religious instinct misguided and perverted through ignorance; but it was, from its very incipiency, a deliberate and impious attempt to usurp the power and prerogatives of Jehovah, and transfer the spiritual allegiance of mankind to their earthly sovereigns. This attempt was inaugurated and continued by the sovereigns themselves. It did not originate with the common people. Nor was it done "by rude opposition, but by insidious addition and vitiation." Nimrod himself, the originator of this system of idolatry, is said to have been a "proud, daring, and ambitious man," who, "urged on by the great author of all evil, daringly claimed divine honor, and thus prepared the way for unlimited idolatry." (*Gentile Nations, p. 231.*) He was "adored by the Chaldeans, under the name of Bel-Dominus, and as the image of the sun." In fact it is

quite clear that he "not only assumed a regal but also a sacred and divine character. To such an extent, indeed, was this carried that "the memory of the monarch seems to have been nearly lost in the celebrity of the god!" In short, he seems to have claimed to be the promised seed of the woman who was to establish a divine government upon earth, to which all people should be subject. It is certain that he was worshipped as divine, and that he was the original of the god Bel, or Belus, the principal divinity of Chaldea. Thus the foundations of an idolatrous system were laid, the object of which was to alienate men's hearts from God, undermine his authority among mankind, personate and supplant the Lord Jesus Christ as God's incarnate Son, and so, if possible, entirely overturn the kingdom of God and thwart his designs in the redemption of our world. The whole system, in fact, bears the marks of satanic guile, and shows most clearly that the original author of man's ruin was now planning to prevent his redemption. The king himself being at the same time the head of the civil and sacred administration, and invested with divine prerogatives, the sacred and secular affairs of the kingdom were all cast in the same mould, and had no separate existence. They touched each other at every point, and were in fact almost identical. Such in brief, were the principal characteristics of the system of idolatry originated by Nimrod. So rapidly did the contagion of this superstition spread abroad that, in order to preserve mankind from universal corruption, as in the days before the flood, God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees, that he might make him the repository of the divine will, and raise up a people among whom the knowledge and worship of the true God might be preserved. From this time forward a mighty conflict raged between the true and false religions. The God of Abraham demanded the universal homage of mankind, and the gods of the nations resisted those demands. The divine claims were not enforced by political measures, or carnal ordinances, nor were his worshippers attracted by the glittering pageantry and imposing ceremonials of idolatry. To hearts depraved by nature, full of pride, and enveloped with darkness, incapable of being moved by moral motives or charmed and controlled by holy principles and influences, the latter possessed the greater power. Human nature, corrupted by the fall, proved to be congenial soil for superstition and error. It is not surprising, therefore, that once incorporated with the national theology of any land, idolatry should become exceedingly prolific. Such appears to have been the case in Babylon. The gods of Babylon consequently became not only numerous, but gigantic and costly. It is estimated that the statue of Bel, or Belus, which was also called Jupiter, was 40 feet in height, made of beaten gold, and weighed 1,000 Babylonish talents. A Babylonish talent being estimated at £3,500 sterling, the whole image would be worth upwards of $17,000,

000. The Temple of Belus is said to have been a half a mile in circumference, and a furlong in height. From all that is known of this expensive system of idolatry it is believed that it retained the principal features by which it was characterized in its origin viz: the union of the regal and divine prerogatives in the person of the monarch—until long after the days of Nebuchadnezzar, though perhaps it found its fullest exemplification in him. In harmony with this view, it is tolerably certain that the great image which he caused to be set up in the Plain of Dura was intended to be a statue of himself, and that, in demanding with so much imperiousness that religious worship should be offered to it throughout his dominion, he was but enforcing his own claims to be regarded as a god. The prophecy of Isaiah, Chap. 14:18, 14, renders this view exceedingly probable. Speaking, evidently of this very monarch, he says, "For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." It is evident from this prediction that Nebuchadnezzar would lay claim to the religious homage and veneration, not only of his own people, but also of the people of God, who are supposed to be meant by the "stars of God;" while "the mount of the congregation in the sides of the north," doubtless means Mount Zion, or Moriah, on which the temple stood, and where the congregation of the Hebrews met to worship the God of heaven. It is rendered by Dr. Clarke. "The mount of the divine presence." Now, if the foregoing remarks are just, and assuming that the prediction concerning him was verified, then Nebuchadnazzar did, in fact, arrogate to himself divine prerogatives and power, and in his pride and presumption he endeavoured to "exalt himself above all that was called God, or that was worshipped, so that he, as God, sat in the temple of God, showing himself that he was God;" and thus he earned for the royal city the unenviable distinction, "*Babylon the great, the Mother of Harlots, and abominations of the earth.*" Who, then, can determine that when Nebuchadnezzar made this "image of gold whose height was three-score cubits, and set it up in the Plain of Dura," he was not saying in his heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. . . I will be like the Most High?" Or if not at this time, at what more probable time would it have been? It is certain that at this time he required "the stars of God," or the princes and nobles of Israel, to bow down before an image under penalty of death. His prospects for realizing this unholy ambition, to say the least, were never so bright as at this time. The Jews were his vassals, he possessed, "a kingdom, power and strength, and glory, and wheresoever the children of men dwelt, the beasts of the field, and the fowls of the heaven had been given into his hands, and he was ruler of them

all." If ever he was in a position to vie with the Almighty it was now. Had not God's power to protect his people against this powerful rival failed? Had he not led the Israelites into captivity in spite of their God? Might he not therefore, adopt the impious language of Sennacherib, King of Assyria, in his message to the nobles of Jerusalem "Hath any of the gods of the nations delivered at all his land out of the hand of the King of Assyria?" He doubtless failed to trace the subjection of the Jews to their unfaithfulness, on account of which God was using him as a scourge to punish them, but vainly regarded himself as more than Jehovah's equal, and imagined that he could set him at defiance; and if ever there was a time when such impious pretentions were justified by circumstances that time had come. If ever a king who had swayed the Babylonian sceptre, was in a position to make them good, that king was Nebuchadnezzar. If, therefore, the battle were to the strong, and the race to the swift, his aims would be accomplished and his unholy ambition gratified. He doubtless felt confident of success, and already began to pride himself upon his supremacy when, lo! his day dreams are interrupted by this vision of the night, in which the handwriting of his doom is seen upon the wall. Under such circumstances, with what significance and propriety would these words of Daniel apply to him as the ruling head of this idolatrous empire, and the impious aspirant after divine honors: "Thou art this head of gold."

But, as we have before intimated, this same feature of idolatry ran down through the succeeding kingdoms of Media, Macedonia and Rome, gradually degenerating, however, into the lowest and most revolting forms of licentiousness and corruption, as seen in the gradual deterioration of the image. We cannot, probably, more clearly or concisely describe these facts than in the language of the late George Smith, the distinguished archæologist: "Babylon, intensely devoted to this Satanic superstition, passed away; Persia arose to rule the nations; but it was under the same malign influence. The king there, too, was worshipped as divine; and although the good Spirit had given a large communication of truth, it was so completely overlaid with the profane assumption of king and priest, that the people were left blindly to worship the sun, or the sacred fire.

"Greece then arose to exercise the supremacy over the world, and presented a marked display of the continued collision between these antagonistic powers. Highly endowed with intellectual might, richly favored with divine influence, possessing every element of human greatness in most abundant measure, Greece was unfaithful to the light of truth, and the influence of God. 'Sin reigned unto death;' a low, corrupt, sensual, and debased idolatry prevailed, until the reasoning mind turned away in disgust, and disowned even the existence of God.

"Rome was but an unworthy representation of Greece. Starting on her career of progress with much of truth and divine teaching, Rome became infinitely corrupt. Her idolatry was as vast in its range, and as vile as possible. Never rising so high in intellect, or genius, or art, as Greece, Rome plunged deeper, if it could be, in infamous impurity, until the inspired apostle declares, 'God gave them up' (unto vile affections, Rom. 1: 26). Thus Satan reigned during successive centuries, grasping authority over the physical nature of man (Acts xix), directing and endowing the human mind, until, notwithstanding the possession of boundless power and immense learning, human nature in Rome sunk to the lowest level of infamous degradation. so that it may be questioned whether in any part of the world it can now be found so very vile."—*Gentile Nations, p. 523.*

So far as these remarks apply to Rome they are fully confirmed by the apostle in the first chapter of his epistle to the Romans, from the 21st verse, and to a large extent his language is applicable to the previous kingdoms also. "When they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man," &c.

Now if anything was needed to complete the proof that it is this anti-Christian, or idolatrous element in these kingdoms that this vision has to do with, we have that proof in the object made use of to represent it. It was *an image*, —the most appropriate and expressive emblem of idolatry that could be conceived. There is a propriety in everything that God does, and certainly the utmost propriety is seen in the selection of an image to represent image worship; and of an image in human form to represent the deification of human nature. But if mere temporal power or civil government be intended, no matter what the form, we fail to see the propriety of this figure. It seems so clear that it was the idolatrous element in these kingdoms that was represented by this image, that we are at a loss to know how any other opinion could ever have found acceptance.

But it may be asked, did the gold, and silver, and brass, and iron, and clay features of this idolatry, all exist in the Roman period, or whenever the contact of the stone took place? We reply, that the distinguishing characteristic of the whole system, from Nimrod down to Nero, and beyond, was essentially the same, and throughout the whole of this period it might be justly and most appropriately represented by an image in human form, inasmuch as that distinguishing characteristic was, as we have shown, the deification of human nature. As before intimated, the various elements of which the image was composed were employed to describe the moral deterioration that took place in

the system after the days of Nebuchadnezzar. Yet we can easily conceive that all the phases of that system, from the best to the worst, might be found to exist, less or more, in any, or all of the periods it was designed to include. There was, doubtless, the "miry clay" element in Nebuchadnezzar's days, but it was not the *prevailing* element. So there was doubtless, the "golden" element in the Roman period, though *it* was not at that time the prevailing element. The phase of the system which *distinguished* it in the respective periods referred to, was unquestionably intended to be represented by the various metals, though we are certainly not to suppose that the one phase of the system alone existed in each of these periods. To assume that such was the case would involve a suddenness of transformation between the respective periods utterly at variance with the facts of the case. All that seems necessary to a proper understanding of the matter is that a gradual deterioration of the system took place during the continuance of the four kingdoms in question, as indicated in the differences between gold, silver, brass &c, until it became as base and corrupt in its teachings and influences, as the "miry clay" that was mixed with the iron in its feet. Thus the whole image would be present whenever the contact of the stone took place, so long as the system it represented remained entire.

2. *The Stone.*—In seeking an interpretation of this we are not left to conjecture. Daniel has explained it so clearly that there is no room for misconception. After describing what was represented by the image, he proceeds to interpret the meaning of the stone. He says, in verses 44 and 45, that, "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever, forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold." These words clearly identify the stone with the "Kingdom of the God of heaven." Observe, too the propriety of this figure. Christ is frequently called a Stone in Scripture, for reasons which we need not now discuss, and believers are also called "stones," or "lively stones;" hence there is the utmost propriety in representing that kingdom of which Christ is the royal head, and believers the royal subjects, by the figure of a stone. Notice,

(*a.*) This stone was "cut out of the mountain without hands," which is supposed to denote its *spirituality*. So the phrase "without hands" usually signifies in Scripture. "A house not made with hands" evidently denotes a spiritual house. "Circumcision made without hands," doubtless means spiritual circumcision. "A tabernacle not made with hands" evidently means a spiritual or heavenly tabernacle. So the "stone cut out without hands" denotes the spirituality of the kingdom it is employed to

represent. This view is also sustained by the general teachings of scripture. Christ himself said, Luke 17. 20, "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation, neither shall they say, Lo, here! or lo, there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." So the Apostle Paul, Rom. 11: 17, says, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." These passages clearly show that the kingdom of God is to be invisible, and designed to regulate the secular affairs of men only so far as to see that they are conducted in righteousness, having to do chiefly with men's spiritual and eternal interests.

(*b.*) This kingdom was to be *comparatively insignificant* in its rise,—a mere stone.

Such an agency would seem utterly inadequate to the demolition of a colossal image of silver, and gold, and brass, and iron; but, "It is not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."

As compared with gold and silver, a stone is almost valueless. So Christianity, as compared with the imposing rites of superstition, is, in the world's estimation, about as little worth. Christ is 'a root out of a dry ground." He was poor. He had not where to lay his head. Hence the Jews "stumbled" at him.

This stone was undoubtedly intended to represent something small at first, such as would be like a stone for size in comparison with this great image. In describing the same kingdom Christ compares it to a "a grain of mustard seed, the smallest of all seeds," and to "a little leaven." As compared with the numbers magnificence and wealth of earthly kingdoms, Christ's cause was very small. His followers were "a little flock."

(*c.*) Notwithstanding all this, the kingdom of God is to be *victorious*. "It shall break in pieces, and consume all these kingdoms," v. 44. "It brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold," v. 45. "It smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, and the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors," vs. 34, 35. Some have understood this language as implying that violence would be made use of, and fierce judgments employed in the demolition of the image, but we think that nothing of the kind is intended. The language is not to be literalized any more than the things described. If a literal transaction were being described then we should say that violence was intended. But if the destruction of idolatry by the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, or Christianity, be meant, then nothing more can be intended than *first*, the potency of Christianity in subjugating and destroying anti-Christianism, and *secondly*, the thoroughness with which this will be effected. The language is such as the Divine Spirit frequently employs for a similar purpose.

As, for example, when God by Isaiah, (41; 15, 16), promises his people a complete conquest over their enemies, who are represented as mountains, he says, "behold I will make thee a new, sharp, threshing instrument having teeth: thou shall thresh the mountains and beat them small, and shall make the hills as chaff. Thou shalt fan them, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them." The same thought is also expressed by our Lord himself when he says, Luke 20; 18, "Whosoever shall fall upon this stone shall be broken, but on whomsoever it shall fall it will grind him to powder." The very idea of literalness in such passages is revolting. Yet such language is often made use of to represent the potency of spiritual agencies and influences, and the thoroughness with which they accomplish their work. Take the following as examples of this: "Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. 23: 29. "For the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, &c., Heb. 4: 12. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds," II.Cor. 10· 4. By universal consent these passages are only expressive of the power and efficiency of spiritual influences in subduing hostility to God; so we believe the language of Daniel, in describing the destruction of the image, is simply expressive of the same thing. Idolatry of whatever form will be utterly destroyed by the kingdom of God, but the opposition described by Daniel seems to be to that particular phase of idolatry that we have already described.

(*d.*) The kingdom of God is also to be *progressive*. It was to become a "great mountain." This evidently denotes extensive growth or development. It could not, therefore, represent Christ himself, as some have thought, but his cause. The uniform teachings of Scripture are to the effect that his kingdom is to be aggressive. The parables of the mustard seed and leaven, before referred to, are illustrative of growth and progress, and harmonize with the prediction of Isaiah: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."

(*e.*) It is also to become *universal*, and "fill the whole earth." The following scriptures confirm this view: Mal. 1: 11; Dan. 7: 14; Psa. 72: 8.

(*f.*) It is likewise to be *everlasting*. "It shall stand forever." v. 44. In support of this, see Psa. 145: 13; Dan. 7: 14; Luke 1: 33; Heb. 1: 8; Isa. 9: 7.

ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

A question of considerable interest arises just here, as to the time when this "kingdom of the God of heaven" was to be established. We may remark that some place the time of its establishment in the future and some in the past. Daniel says expressly

that it was to take place "In the days of these kings," or the kingdoms represented by the image. The Roman kingdom, the last of the series, is undoubtedly past. No vestige of it remains. Those who place the time in the future, therefore, interpret the image as representing, not four kingdoms, as Daniel, but fourteen, making each of the toes of the image to represent a kingdom. They would thus divide the Roman kingdom into ten other kingdoms, and as long as any one of these ten kingdoms remains the time for the establishment of God's Kingdom will not have expired. It will be sufficient, however, to note *first*, that Daniel makes not even the remotest allusion to such ten kingdoms, in explaining this vision to Nebuchadnezzar; hence we infer that for the purpose of this vision no such thing was intended; and *secondly*, as if to prevent any misconception, Daniel expressly includes the toes of the feet in the fourth kingdom. He says, verses 41, and 42, "Whereas thou sawest the feet and *toes* part of potter's clay, and part of iron, the kingdom (not kingdoms), shall be divided." How divided? See next verse: "And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken." The division of the kingdom, then, will not consist of its being divided into ten other kingdoms, but in its being "partly strong and partly broken," or "brittle," as the margin reads. This is further sustained by the 43rd verse: "And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with miry clay." Now, let it be observed while Daniel includes the toes with the feet in verse 41, to represent the fourth kingdom, so he uses the toes only in verse 42 to represent the same kingdom. Certainly they cannot represent at the same time the Roman kingdom and ten others besides. The only legitimate inference is, therefore, that the kingdom of the God of heaven is either set up already, or Daniel's interpretation was erroneous. Assuming the former to be the correct inference, we would inquire if that kingdom is established, when could it have taken place, if not at the introduction of Christianity? The divinely commissioned harbinger came "preaching in the wilderness of Judea, saying, Repent ye for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Mark 9: 1. But why quote scripture to prove our position? The whole New Testament is full of it. Almost every parable our Lord uttered was designed to illustrate its nature. He is "exalted a Prince," as well as a Saviour, and "he must reign till all his enemies are put beneath his feet." Then shall the universal shout go up, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever."

It may be said that the destruction of the image is to be sudden, and therefore cannot be harmonized with the foregoing view. We reply that the suddenness of the destruction is only im-

agitary. Daniel says nothing about it. He speaks only of thoroughness. It may require one year, or it may require one thousand, or even ten thousand for aught that appears to the contrary in Daniel. The smiting was to begin in the days of the feet or Roman period, and continue until the forms of anti-Christian power represented by the image were effectually destroyed, as denoted by their being "ground to powder." And surely Anti-christ never received such an effectual blow as it did by the ministry and work of Jesus. Paul assailed it when he preached to the Athenians from the text "To the unknown God," and every gospel sermon, and every believing prayer since the days of Christ has been a blow aimed at the image, and every soul reclaimed from the dominion of darkness has been a fragment broken from the image form. Moreover, this process will, according to the sure word of prophecy, go on until the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea," and

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun
Doth his successive journeys run;
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till suns shall rise and set no more."

Then shall there be heard "as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Even so, come Lord Jesus. Amen.

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